

What Is Claimed Is:

1 1. A method for distributing file content via one or more cache providers,
2 comprising:
3 a) purchasing one or more commodity contracts, wherein each commodity
4 contract specifies a right to use a stated amount of cache resources belonging to a
5 contracted cache provider during a specified time interval for servicing download
6 requests;
7 b) making file content accessible to at least one contracted cache provider
8 wherefrom it will be available to users for downloading; and
9 c) taking action which causes one or more devices to redirect download requests
10 that were initially directed to a content provider, such that the requests will be redirected
11 to said at least one contracted cache provider.

1 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the method is carried out by a content
2 provider, at least one of the commodity contracts is purchased from an intermediate party
3 distinct from said at least one contracted cache provider, and the method further
4 comprises directing at least one payment to the intermediate party for a service performed
5 by said at least one contracted cache provider.

1 3. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the commodity contracts is
2 purchased through a broker.

1 4. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one of the commodity contracts is
2 purchased from an exchange, and the method further comprises directing at least one
3 payment to the exchange for a service performed by the pertinent contracted cache
4 provider.

1 5. The method of claim 1, wherein commodity contracts are purchased from two
2 or more distinct cache providers so as to collectively provide for the servicing of
3 download requests in a desired group of time intervals from a desired group of locations.

1 6. The method of claim 5, further comprising selecting the two or more distinct
2 cache providers in such a way as to drive down a total cost of the commodity contracts.

1 7. The method of claim 1, further comprising paying a fee for at least one cache
2 provider to service at least one download request, wherein the fee is based, at least in
3 part, on total download bandwidth.

1 8. The method of claim 1, wherein the cache resources comprise bandwidth.

1 9. A method, comprising:

2 a) selling one or more commodity contracts, wherein each commodity contract
3 specifies an amount of cache resources to be made available during a specified time
4 interval for servicing download requests directed to a content provider's file content;

5 b) as a result of redirection, receiving one or more download requests that were
6 initially directed to one or more content providers; and servicing one or more of the
7 redirected download requests in accordance with one or more of the commodity
8 contracts.

1 10. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the commodity contracts is
2 sold to an intermediate party distinct from the pertinent content provider, and the method
3 further comprises directing at least one bill to the intermediate party for servicing a
4 download request.

1 11. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the commodity contracts is
2 sold through a broker.

1 12. The method of claim 9, wherein at least one of the commodity contracts is
2 purchased from an exchange, and the method further comprises directing at least one
3 payment to the exchange for a service performed by the pertinent cache provider.

1 13. The method of claim 9, wherein commodity contracts are sold to two or more
2 distinct content providers so as to collectively allocate a desired fraction of total cache
3 resources in a desired group of time intervals.

1 14. The method of claim 9, further comprising sending a bill for the servicing of
2 at least one download request, wherein the amount of the bill is based, at least in part, on
3 total download bandwidth.

1 15. The method of claim 14, wherein the bill is directed to an intermediate party
2 distinct from the content provider on whose behalf the download request is serviced.

1 16. The method of claim 9, wherein the cache resources comprise bandwidth.

1 17. A method, comprising:

2 a) purchasing at least one commodity contract from each of one or more cache
3 providers, wherein each commodity contract specifies a right to use a stated amount of
4 cache resources belonging to a contracted cache provider during a specified time interval
5 for servicing download requests; and

6 b) reselling at least one said commodity contract for ultimate acquisition by a
7 content provider.

1 18. The method of claim 17, wherein the purchase and the resale of the
2 commodity contract are made directly from a cache provider and to a content provider,
3 respectively.

1 19. The method of claim 17, wherein the purchase of the commodity contract is
2 made from an intermediate party, or the resale of the commodity contract is made to an
3 intermediate party, and the intermediate party is distinct from the pertinent cache
4 provider and the pertinent content provider.

1 20. The method of claim 19, wherein the purchase of the commodity contract is
2 made from an intermediate party, and the resale of the commodity contract is made to an
3 intermediate party, and both said intermediate parties are distinct from the pertinent cache
4 provider and the pertinent content provider.

1 21. The method of claim 17, wherein two or more commodity contracts are
2 purchased from a single cache provider and resold to a plurality of content providers.

1 22. The method of claim 17, wherein commodity contracts are purchased from
2 two or more distinct cache providers and resold to a single content provider.

1 23. The method of claim 17, wherein said purchasing and reselling steps are
2 carried out by a commodity exchange.

1 24. The method of claim 17, further comprising: providing at least one payment,
2 ultimately to be directed to a cache provider, for the servicing of a download request by
3 the cache provider; and providing at least one bill, ultimately to be directed to a content
4 provider, for the servicing of the download request.

1 25. The method of claim 17, further comprising, responsive to the purchase and
2 resale of at least one said commodity contract, taking action which causes one or more
3 devices to redirect download requests that were initially directed to the content provider,
4 such that the requests will be directed to one or more of the cache providers.

1 26. The method of claim 17, wherein the cache resources comprise bandwidth.